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Subject: A Safe Guide for Young Men.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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A SAFE GUIDE FOR YOUNG MEN.

“And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.”—GENESIS XXVIII., 20-22.

You are familiar with this history. It is the history of a very early day; and yet, by many important threads it is connected intimately with the history of modern times. It is the same human nature as ours, though under different circumstances.

Jacob was not permitted to form a marriage connection with the daughters of the land in which he was sojourning. He would bring into his household idolatrous tendencies. So he was sent back to the parent stock. Journeys then were very different from journeys now, even in that land. From the extreme south of Palestine, he had to thread his way amidst multiplied difficulties. Alone, unattended, on foot, with such provision as he could gather, he wandered to the extreme north, and far beyond, and to the east, the land of his fathers, the precise location of which is much in dispute. And it was on his way there that, lying down to sleep, and propping himself up with nothing softer than a heap of stones, he had a vision and a promise of God made to him. Then it was that, on awaking, he was profoundly impressed with a sense of the divine presence, and all his life was opened up to him. Then he made this vow and covenant with his God: If God would go with him, and prosper him; if he would preserve him from danger, and minister to him the necessary substance of life, then on his part he would take the Lord for his God. And he also made a vow of benevolence: that he would be unselfish, and would devote a tenth part of his substance to the works of goodness—that is, to God.

There is something especial, to my mind, in a part of this promise:

“If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God.”

Some have thought that it was one of the many gods that then were moving round the world, and trying to get worshipers; and that Jacob promised, if he would bestow his patronage on him, he would make him his God, and become one of his votaries.

I look upon it very differently? What had he to offer? What was there that could be an offering to God? There was but one thing, and that was his own affections. It was a filial offering. "In requital of this goodness to me, thou shalt be my God. I will love thee. I will obey thee. I will serve thee." A man has no higher offer to God than that of his affections. And there is none that is more esteemed.

Now, every young man who leaves his father's house, and comes down to great cities like these, may be said to be in many respects making such a journey as the patriarch made; not, to be sure, going to seek a wife among the father's former kinspeople, but going to seek, substantially, the establishment of his household and his fortune. He leaves his father's house, and goes out into the great wilderness of the world, and encounters a thousand more dangers than ever the patriarch did, more insidious, more powerful, more easily seducing; and there is no young man that can afford to go out and begin a life in these great cities, where beat upon him every one of the passions of the human heart, and the fiercest temptations. No man can afford to go out into life and begin for himself without making a covenant with God. And I do not know of any covenant that could be more simple, more rational, or more proper in every way, than this one that the old patriarch Jacob made.

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God."

Among the visions that the young indulge in, I think there is none more beautiful, none that springs from a nobler impulse, than this, that if it please God to give them prosperity there shall come a time when they will go back to their father's house, and, instead of the rude farm-house in which he dwelt, build him a far more convenient one; and that say of the dear old mother whose face is covered with toil-marks, having given herself night and day, and stinted herself, that she might have the means of putting forward her children, "She shall not work forever so." Many a man has the reputation of being avaricious and addicted to business; of working night and day to hoard; but there is at the bottom a root of filial love; and he says, "The day shall come in which the old people shall not be slaves. I will redeem them from this bondage, and will make them happy." And it is a very generous feeling, and a very noble one.

There are a great many who, perhaps, feel that they shall return yet, one day, to the place from which they started. If our youth is happy I think we never forget our early associations, and no place afterward seems so congenial to us as that where we spent our boyhood days. How beautiful the plainest scenery, how bewitching the most common-place things, which are woven into the memory of one's childhood home! How do men that traverse their own land, and circumnavigate the globe, come back to describe some little plain place, some small village, almost without attractions, as the most charming place they have ever seen! Ah! they carry in their eyes and hearts the things that make it beautiful. Thus the memories of childhood are sweet, precious, beautiful, and generous.

The impulse with many young men whose parents are already prosperous, so that the necessity does not exist of lifting them out of poverty, is, perhaps, that they will go back and settle down at the old home after they have made themselves a substantial fortune by their own fidelity and enterprise.

But between the purpose and the performing is a region far longer, morally speaking, than that between Beer-sheba and Paden Aram. And between the starting from one's father's house, and the coming back to it again, there are more dangers crowded, often, than were ever crowded into the journey and experience of Jacob.

Now, although I have preached a great many sermons to the young, I do not think I have preached one too many. Because temptations are like tides that come in continuous periods, alternations; and sermons ought to come as often, if not oftener, than these alternations. They ought to keep filling up, filling up, filling up the intervals that otherwise would be liable to be filled with evil influences.

Many of you have no father in New York or Brooklyn. There is no one here that thinks for you, or cares particularly about you, so far as your better nature is concerned. There are many that would tamper with you, and lower the tone of your conscience. There are many that would make the way of wrong easier for you. Some of you are so fortunate as to have friends that hold you up. Perhaps many of you have the felicity of being surrounded by wholesome household influences. But many hundreds come to this church, either regularly or from time to time, who have no person in the world near them that thinks for them, prays for them, and talks plainly to them. Therefore I feel in some sense as though, now, my years and my relations to you justify my taking the place to you of father, and giving you repeated counsels, bearing upon the ordinary procedure of your life. And this is what I propose to do to-night.

I desire that every one who has come down to this great mart, where so much is won and so much is lost, this vast workshop, where so much is made of good and of evil, these terrible shambles, where so many souls and bodies are slaughtered, should remember how much their success here depends upon a few simple, common-place moralities. I desire to reiterate, as I have often and often asseverated, how much your prosperity depends upon your industry, your frugality, your self-restraint in all things, your truthfulness, your honesty, your fidelity. And I the more emphasize this now because the contrary impression is always prevalent, for very simple reasons which I will mention in a moment.

You are particularly liable to be misled, just now, by the idea that there are many brilliant chances of fortune in coming down to a city like this. Setting aside the ordinary courses, the ordinary motives, and the ordinary instruments of productive industry, young men come to New York thinking of it as a great gold mine. As one who has read in the Arabian Nights of the man that fell down a precipice and found himself in a field covered with diamonds which he could have for the picking up; so young men come to New York almost thinking it is a place where they will have only to fill their pockets and be rich. They come with the most exaggerated ideas of the wealth-producing power of these great cities.

Now, they are greatly mistaken. You take as large a population as that of New York, averaging it through the country, and you will find the law of productive industry to be the same in both city and country. You are concentrated here. Here you are peculiarly situated. But according to the law of political economy the chances of success are the same. Luck, or chance, which is the basis of the fool's philosophy, has no more to do with permanent prosperity in these cities than anywhere else. There are sudden upliftings of prosperity, and there are just as sudden collapses. There are brilliant adventurers here, who have for a time an apparent and specious prosperity; but so it is everywhere. And success in life here, or where you were born and brought up, depends substantially upon morality, industry, frugality, foresight, sagacity, perseverance in well-doing—that is, in working upon fidelity and honor. Truth and honesty are the great staple elements which, if a man has them and employs them, will certainly give him prosperity, though they may not give him wealth, nor lift him to places of honor or trust. Those are things which are to be determined much by a man's natural forces. Now and then incidental forces may come in, but in the main, judging by great averages, men find about the places which they are fitted for, and reap and gain about that which they

are qualified to reap and gain. And productive forces are employed best by those who have the simple, sterling, substantial moralities of life. Lying and cheating and swindling are no more prosperous in New York than in Canandaigua, or in Mount Vernon, or in the smallest village in the land. They are prosperous nowhere. They are the devil's delusions that mislead men. For there can be no permanent prosperity except that which is built upon the broadest grounds of common morality.

Wealth is to be gained by paying for it, in thought, in industry, or in some other way, so that you shall have given a fair equivalent for it. The wealth which you collect, you must earn. This is a principle which men cannot long evade. The sphere in which you work here is larger than that in which you worked in the country; but it is a sphere which is governed by precisely the same laws. The climate in cities is not essentially different from that in the country. There are the same seasons here. There are the same Summer and Winter. There are the same light and heat. There is the same electricity. Nature is the same, and so are the great elements of morality, and great elements of political economy; and the vague notion that wealth comes by some lucky stroke, some brilliant essay, some fortunate alliance, or some short cut which other men have not discovered is quite as false here as there. Men will fly much sooner than they will become prosperous by any such scheme as this.

Hundreds and thousands have come down here despising the simple moralities on which they have been brought up; despising the productive forces patiently and continuously applied; despising small profits honestly made and surely held; despising simplicity and unostentatious gain. To make a show is one of the insanities of approbation. It is one of the disclosures of vanity, of the overweening sense of a man's own capacity, of a sort of delirious joy and expectation of success, and of the exhibitory effects of success in after life.

I therefore beseech you not to set aside all those great laws which have been proved generation after generation, age after age, and which are still exemplified in our midst. Especially do not be led astray by any appearance. If wicked men prosper, do not give up your belief that morality is safer than wickedness. If men who are absolutely rotten shine by the phosphorescence of decay, and dazzle your eyes, remember that in ~~doctrine~~ their feet shall slide. I am just as sure that ill-gotten gains will destroy the getter, and that immorality inflated into prosperity will by and by collapse like an overblown bladder, as I am of my existence. You had better read the seventh Psalm once a week nowadays, when glittering, corrupt and

due time

corrupting men seem to be carrying off the honors and emoluments of life—those of you, especially, who are asking yourselves whether it is worth your while to wash your hands in innocency and self-denial. In God's due time, when his great wheel comes round, multitudes of men who have disregarded his laws will be destroyed.

Surely, the universe is conducted upon principles of God which make truth, and honor, and industry, and integrity more profitable than fraud and deceit and malignity can be. The manhood that is in man is safer to be trusted than the animalhood that is in man. And if, here and there, there are some glorified swine that root for jewels and gold, and wear them in their snouts, do not you become a hog that you may be prospered like them. Manhood yet, against swinehood. For, remember that however a man may seem to prosper by violating the laws of morality and purity, he forfeits confidence, respect, sympathy, all that which holds a man up and rewards him when he stands in the esteem and love of his fellow-men in the community. Although for a time he may sustain himself, the time comes for him to fall and be dashed to pieces. Sooner could you gather up the fragments of a glass goblet that had fallen from a high point upon a stone pavement, than you could put a corrupt man on his feet again when he has once gone down. And you that now envy him, and for the sake of favor would servilely follow him, will be among the men that will hiss at him, and say, "I knew it would be so. I always despised him."

Let me beg of you who have left your home, and come down to this great city to make your fortune, not to forget the plain living of your father's house. You were brought up frugally. You did not use to wear very fine clothes. You were accustomed to dress very substantially; but farmers' boys do not generally wear broad-cloth when they are working on the farm. And there are young men here who would not have to reach their hand out far to get hold of the old coarse suits—their brown tow clothes for Summer, and their substantial homespun woolen clothes for Winter.

When such young men come down to New York, people seem to them, I suppose, as butterflies do when they come out of the chrysalis, and open up their fine wings, and begin their Summer's cruise. Young men, when they come here, feel that they must be re-born into respectability and gentility; and their idea of gentility is to have fine clothes, and a little money in the pocket, and to play gentleman. Under such circumstances men go down very soon. They lose the simplicity of their tongue. They eat strange viands, which have strange ways with them; and they drink strange drinks which they have not learned to mix at their father's board. Honest, simple-

minded, plain, excellent people were your parents ; and you lived temperately and moderately at home ; but you want to shine out here ; and you become dishonest in order to do it. Some can afford to dress as people in the city dress ; but are you of them ?

You came down here almost with nothing. Your father was unable to do more than pay your traveling expenses. And you have only slender earnings. You receive only a boy's or young man's salary. It is only just enough to keep you from year's end to year's end, provided you are extremely frugal and economical.

Now, there are two courses, either of which you can take. One is to say, "I am not living nor dressing so well as my companions, and I must have fine clothes and better fare." The other is to say, with stern manliness, "I have come down here to make my way ; and honesty and simplicity require that I should not live any higher than I myself can earn the means of living. I will be no man's pauper or beneficiary. I will make what I take ; and what I make and take shall support me." The discipline which you get from this latter course of self-denial is better than going to college. Many a man cradled in learning gets no discipline ; but a young man who, having been reared and trained in self-indulgence, leaves his father's house, and comes to the city, and says, "I will be beholden to no man ; I can afford to live as plain as any man, both in regard to diet and clothes, if it is necessary to my manhood, and I will not have anything which I cannot fairly earn ; I will be independent and establish myself,"—such a young man gets a discipline which is worth a university education. By forming that purpose and adhering to it he is educating himself in the very elements of manhood. He is making a *man* of himself.

Do you suppose men think less of you because you dress plainly ? Fools may, but men do not. Do you think your chances in life are less because you feel ashamed to show a man where your room is, and where you sleep ? Why, many a man has slept in a barn who was better than many another who slept in mansions and palaces. A man ought not to be ashamed to say, "I am poor, and I cannot do so and so." It is the curse of America ; since there are no orders of nobility here, men are ashamed to admit that they are poor. The young man defends himself, and says, "I am not so poor as you take me to be." Even sensible people yield to the temptation of the devil, and are ashamed to acknowledge that they work.

I suppose there are persons in this congregation who keep but a single servant, and do half their work themselves, and who, if you go to see them, will talk as if they did not need to work, but did it because they chose to. They are willing to have you think that they

work from choice; but they would not for anything have you understand that they have to work; that they cannot get along without it. It takes a great deal of common sense to enable a person who moves in genteel society to say, without blushing, "I have to do my own work."

People are a great deal more sensible in Europe than in America in such matters. A man of moderate means there says, "I must travel frugally. I cannot order expensive things. I am not able to do it." There is an honor in living within one's means; and a man who is truly bred will do it.

Young men are ashamed to have it understood that they wear a silver watch because they cannot afford to wear a gold one. It is thought a young man who cannot have a gold watch in this country cannot be much. And when they have got a gold watch, they must have a gold chain. And when they have got a gold chain, they must have something dangling at the end of it. And these things become necessities. The young man wants them, he thinks about them, he dreams of them. Other young men have them, and why should not he? There is a man, his rival, who is no better looking than he, and who has no better education than he; but oh, that vest and that jewelry! They nearly kill him with envy. He cannot afford to go without these things because his young companions have excited his vanity, and corrupted his simplicity, and gone far toward undermining his manhood. He is unwilling to live plainly, and more than plainly, as his circumstances dictate that he should at the beginning of life.

There are men that stand high in wealth and prosperity, and will to the end of life, who know well that when they came to New York they lived in a way that it would pain them to see one of their sons live. And yet, it was the making of them.

If young men live plainly and simply, it is but for a time. And if they can afford it one year, they can afford it two years, if necessary. And if they can afford it two years, they can afford it four. A man can afford to live plainly until he is able, by his own industry, to live better. Do not walk before you creep. Do not run before you walk. Be willing to live low, and if necessary lower than the working-man. Your manhood should be more to you than your clothes or your food.

Let me beseech of you not to throw off hastily your old household affections. Keep home bright in your heart and in your memory. You have had better opportunities than your sister, or than your younger brother. They toil on, one in the kitchen or the dairy, and the other on the farm or in the shop. You have blossomed out

into a young merchant. And if you have a manly spirit in you, you will never, for one single moment, forget that they are your kin, and dear to you. You will glory in them and over them. You will also remember the sun-browned father and the wrinkled mother. They will be everything to you. No pictorial beauty, and no fanciful belle will be to you what father and mother, and brother and sister are.

When I was in college a young man came there who was in a state of abject and utter poverty. He was determined to have an education. He sawed wood for a livelihood. For more than a year he slept on the floor in his room, wrapping himself up in a blanket. He boarded himself; and his food consisted mostly of Indian meal pudding and molasses. He worked in vacation and term-time to earn a scanty pittance by which to educate himself. When he had finished his course in college, the first thing he did was to put his brother next younger than he through an academy. Then the two together took hold of hands and brought up a sister. She was educated, and has moved very high in influence, though not in fashion, since that time. And the three have had as much brain-power on the age in which we live as any three persons that you could select. And as for me, I could forgive ten thousand infelicities in consideration of such hearty home-love and genuine feeling of brotherhood.

And now that you have broken off from your homes, do not feel that you are better than those that you have left behind. Let your heart never forget your homestead, nor the old people, nor the young people.

About the most despicable thing that I can recollect was this: A young lawyer in a former parish of mine had risen to a conspicuous position. One day I heard that his father and mother had come to town. On making inquiry respecting them, I was told that he had taken them out to the edge of the town to an obscure boarding-place, and was unwilling to have any of his friends know that they were there. He was ashamed to have anybody see the old folks. I learned that they were very reputable, only they were coarse, blunt, Hoosier country people. He had risen to some little eminence, and he felt above them, and was ashamed of them. I had been a warm friend of that young man, but from that time coolness toward him sprang up in my heart. That a son, largely dependent upon the toil which had kept his father and mother in their low condition, they, as it were, plucking out of their own bosom the feathers that made his nest soft, they giving their life that he might live better than they—that he should be ashamed of them seemed as ignominious as anything could possibly be.

Do not, then, let your new associations and new-fangled notions of gentility make you ashamed of the plain old home, nor of the plain old people that are there. Be hearty; be manly; be faithful.

And if before you came from home you pledged your troth to any maiden heart, do not let the devil's temptation of a more favorable connection that shall carry you up in life make you unfaithful to your old covenants and vows to her. Be *faithful*.

Do not make haste to change your religion. There is an impression that when a man comes down to the city he must of course be liberalized; that there are many things at home which are narrow; many notions which are prejudices, and many which are superstitions; much that a man ought to leave behind him. And that is all true. But it does not follow that you are in a situation to judge of what things had best be left behind, or what things had best be changed. Do not, therefore, suddenly change anything. If at home you have been accustomed to observe the Lord's day, I beseech of you, do not let the looseness or laxity of the city take away from you this most precious habit. Some may observe it more strictly than others, some may observe it by a different form of observance; but in some way let that day be marked which has always been marked.

If it were but for one single thing which my childhood Sunday did for me, it would be worth all the pains I had to take to keep it; and that is the spiritualizing influence which it produced upon the whole natural world by its, I had almost said, preternatural silence. I remember that when on Litchfield hill the Sunday sun came up and spread abroad its light, no rattling wagons and no shouting voices were heard. All things were still. And my imagination made them stiller. It seemed to me that the heavens had a depth which they never had on other days, and that nature had a serenity which it never wore on other days. It was a day of rest. The unquivering leaves seemed to rest. The birds seemed more domestic and at rest. All labor was suspended. The cattle on a thousand hills rested. The old worn horses, with harness thrown off, rested in the pasture. And even the team that came to carry the old people to church had a Sunday jog far different from that which it had on other days. Everything seemed to speak to me of profound rest. And nature was stamped with a moral character, so that from that day to this I have had a thought of nature which I should not have had except through the influence of this day of rest. And whatever may be the ecclesiastical arguments and religious considerations in respect to this day of rest, it seems to me that no young man ought to leave out of his memory the Lord's day.

You will have peculiar temptations to break up your religious habits. There will be nobody to look after your religious interests. Your associations with your particular church and neighbors will be gone. You are a stranger in a strange place. You are situated so that it is hard for you to settle down and form Sabbath connections. Nevertheless, keep your Sundays in some way. I admit that it is difficult; but all the more benefit it will be to you if you succeed in doing it.

You are in a boarding-house. There is no Sunday there; there are no books there; there is no company for you there. Where shall you go? What shall you do with yourself Sunday morning? What shall you do with yourself Sunday afternoon? What shall you do with yourself Sunday night? There is a great deal of home-sickness and there is a great deal of heart-sickness on Sundays. There are a great many young men who would give everything in the world if on Sunday there was somebody that cared for them, and would put the arm about them and say, "My dear old fellow, how do you get on?" somebody whose heart should strike on their hearts. I know how it is. I am sorry it is so. I would to God there were some way in which the young man severed from all moral relations, in the city, could have more Sunday, and more chance to keep Sunday than he now has. There will be more provisions in this direction one of these days. Young Men's Christian Associations will yet have Sunday homes where young men shall find company, and some place in which to renew, in part at least, the associations of their childhood-Sunday.

Do not forget your Bible—and this must come very strong against many of you. Where is your Bible? I wish I could take the statistics. That was one of the things which, when you went away from home, your mother put down at the bottom of your trunk—for she packed your trunk. And when a mother packs the trunk of her boy that is going away from home, many are the tears that she sheds over it. And when your mother packed your trunk she wept, and murmured prayers in your behalf, while you were frisking about, buoyant, hopeful, full of exhilaration at the prospect of going down to New York. And she puts the Bible carefully down at the bottom. She had been saving what she could for a whole month to get money enough to buy the nicest Bible in the village store. And in it is her crooked but beautiful writing—for what mother's handwriting is not beautiful when she writes a child's name in a Bible? And besides your name, it may be that she wrote some little text there. And after wrapping some of your things about the Book she filled up the trunk. And when it was slung on to the coach, and you disappeared, she went back to the place where

she packed it, and prayed for you. And after you came to New York you perhaps took this Bible out of the trunk a few times on Sunday, and felt so badly that you could read but little. And it may be that the young fellows where you boarded, who never thought of reading the Bible, laughed at you. After that perhaps you tried to read it secretly. But finally you forgot to do even that. And not wishing to lose the Bible entirely, you put it back in your trunk. And it has been there five years, and you have not once taken it out. Where is your Bible? There is a whole history in the answer to that question. *Where is your Bible?* Take care of your Bible, and your Bible will take care of you.

I do not propose to discuss with you the question raised in modern times as to the authenticity of this Book. I know that it is as good a pilot as ever was. No man can go wrong if he follows the ethics of the Bible. And there is no place where men need its guidance so much as in these very cities. When you go home to-night some of you may not be able to give the heads of this discourse; but I beseech of you to remember one thing—to hunt up your Bible, and read it again, and make it the man of your counsel, and your guide. It is your mother's Bible. It is your father's Bible.

And, then, do not abandon your church. I do not mean by that, that a man may not go from the Presbyterian Church into the Episcopal, or from the Episcopal into the Methodist; but this I mean: that it is not wise for a man hastily to change his faith or denomination. It is not wise for this reason: that although there is a great deal of religion that is blessed of God and made efficacious outside of the ordinary doctrinal features, yet, after all, it is oftentimes the case that experience and associations make our own church and religion best to us. I should always advise a person not to change unless he had a clear conviction that it was best for him to change. I never try to change anybody. There is not a person in this church of two thousand members who can say that I ever said a word to bring him here away from the church in which he was bred. I have the most profound respect for early associations, I think they are full of nutriment, of rest, and of restraint. I should say, therefore, generally, If you have been accustomed to worship in the Episcopal Church, continue there, unless there is some strong and clear reason why you should leave it. If you have been accustomed to go to the Presbyterian Church, continue to go to that. Go where the associations of your childhood will still be played upon, and will still tend to hold you in the right way. If, however, after due consideration, you find a way that makes you happier, holier, more prayerful, more self-denying, then never refuse to change. Do

not do it from novelty, and do not do it from a mere transient preference ; but if you find the spirit of godliness quickened in you, and a deeper Christian life incited in you, under one administration rather than under another, go to the one that affects you most favorably. For the effect of a church upon your heart is the best test of that church's desirableness.

Do you ask me whether I would recommend one to do it, no matter what the denomination might be ? Yes, without any exception. No child of mind should ever come to me and give me evidence that his life was really becoming sweeter and deeper and holier, and ask my permission to go into any other fold of Christ on earth, that I would withhold such permission. I would go with that child and put his hand in the pastor's hand, and give him up cheerfully. It is the hidden soul-life that is more important than any of the schools by which that soul-life is to be ministered unto.

But as far as possible it is desirable that a man's later life should run in the line of his earlier life. There is something beautiful to me in the thought of worshiping with the same view of God which we did in our childhood. There is something very sad to me in every change which I make from my childhood views. I do not like novelties ; I would to God I could believe just as I did when I was a boy ; but changes are going on in different directions. It is not pleasant to me. It is very painful. It is like tearing a branch out of a tree. I would like to worship my father's God, as my father worshiped him. I would like to die with the same symbols in my hand with which I began my childhood life. But I cannot. And when you cannot do it, see that the changes which you make are made in the way of greater godliness, and not in the way of fashion or of worldly influence.

Beware, in such great cities as this, of the influence of the external world upon your ideas of human life and duty. In such cities as this there are many things that have an effect upon our education. There is much that goes in at the ear, and much that impresses us through the eye. Our senses are perpetually stimulated by the things which are around about us. Life tends to become practical rather than spiritual. The value of *things* tends to gain at the expense of the value of *qualities*. In the city you need to live by faith more than anywhere else. You need to realize invisible things, which are more importantly true than any visible things can be. In cities we are dazzled by the glitter, deafened by the din, and worried by the excessive excitement. Men are very easily led into worldly routine. They cease to become reflective. They live by sight ; by the things that they hear ; by newspaper lore. They live upon the surface.

They neither study nor read carefully. They seldom think upon or review what they read, for the purpose of being built up inwardly and solidly of the best qualities of manhood. Therefore beware of importunate influences coming on your senses. See to it that you are carrying on a digestion within, and building up a true knowledge, and educating yourself aright both for this life and the life which is to come.

Though you are young and strong and healthy, there is no certainty that your life will be long continued in this world. I do not say this to alarm you. You have often been to Greenwood. Is it not a beautiful place to go to? There is no place that is more beautiful to me than that. I would as lief drive through those grounds as through the Park—and I do not know but I would rather. In the Park I see people that are dead though living; and in Greenwood I see people that are dead, and stay dead. But there is nothing that affects me so much in Greenwood as to see how few old people are buried there. Really, one would suppose, from seeing the inscriptions on the grave-stones, that there had not been any old people in New York. I have sometimes gone along with my pencil and made memoranda of the number of persons that died in youth, or in the bright and radiant mid-day of life; and the proportion of such would surprise you. If you think not, please go down, sometime, and see for yourselves. I think it would do you all good. And then, to see the places where poor people are buried, and where strangers are buried—I think nothing in the whole city of New York ought to do a man so much good as that. When I see them I have a great many thoughts. I imagine where the strangers came from, how they died, and how they felt, when dying. I imagine a thousand things. And especially to see where the children of the poor are buried touches me more than anything else. I am not sorry to see people who are able put carved monuments or grave-stones with inscriptions on them over the graves of their children; but to see people go and bury their own little children there with nothing but a head-stone, and a little box, with glass cover, containing the child's play-things—little dolls, little wagons, shells, pebbles, and such things—to show that they love the darlings, this always affects me more than anything else. These graves of poor children are sacred. And the playthings that cover them are sacred. I do not believe that even the vagrant boys of the Five Points would steal them. It seems as though God's angels took care of the children of the poor. To go through those grounds and reflect upon these things, has done me a great deal of good, and it will do you a great deal of good if you will try it.

I say this to come to the thought, that, while I would not have you go away gloomy and sad, I desire that every one of you should think that you may be spending your last years on earth, and that what you are to do here below you are to do quickly. I would like to have you from day to day, and from month to month, and from year to year, lay out your pleasures and ambitions and all that is to compose your life with a consciousness that you shall ere long give account at the judgment seat of Christ. You are not far from it. Many of you shall be called before many days to attend the funerals of some that are here. Some of you will die soon, and some of you will live to be forty or fifty years old; but you do not know which will go nor which will remain; and it is good for us all, once in a while, to stop and listen to the beat of the surf on the shores of eternity. It is well once in a while to cleanse ourselves of the fascinations and allurements of this world by bathing in the still and solemn waters of imagined death. Oh, what coolness it will give to the fever of men! Oh, what a check and restraint it will be to heated passions! Oh, what moderation it will impart to over-excited imaginations and desires!

I beseech of you (more especially I speak to those who have no other adviser, and who are willing to listen to my words as to an older brother's or a father's words) to pause. Think whether in your career any other thing is so good for you, or will make you so prosperous, as to follow in the footsteps of the old patriarch, and say, as he said,

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We bless thee, our Heavenly Father, for all thy great mercies to us in the days that are past, and for that hope which has been inspired by our experience for the days to come. Thou hast watched over us tenderly. Thou hast granted to us to know thee, whom to know aright is life eternal. Thou hast, by thy Spirit, breathed a new light into our souls; and by this light thou hast brought us to a higher life, and to a better judgment of things below.

And now we stand by thee, instructed of thee, and beloved of thee, children unabashed, bold with the boldness of affection and with thy command to come boldly to the Throne of grace to obtain mercy and help in time of need. Grant, we beseech of thee this evening, that we may have the token of thy presence. For, is there ever a time that is not a time of need? Do we not need thee for the body's sake? Do we not need thee more for the sake of the soul that is within the body? Do we not need thee rising up and sitting down, in counsel, in action, at home and abroad? Wherever we are, do we not need thee? Do we not need thee in our joy and in our sorrow, in our sin and in our repentance, in our backsliding and in our return to God? Thou art everywhere, and we continually find thee present, and always need thy presence, for refreshment, for confirmation in good, for dissuasion from evil, for all helpfulness. And we are glad to think that thou art He who art sitting in the center of all power, and from whom all things do proceed; that thy heart toward us is the heart of a Father, and that thy feelings are the feelings of long-suffering and tender mercy.

And we rejoice that thou wilt not so love us as to suffer us to come to evil and to harm. Thou wilt not pass by transgression. Thou wilt not suffer guilt to go unpunished. Thou dost love us so that thou wilt be faithful to us as we are faithful to our children. We chastise them with stripes which wound our own hearts. So wilt thou be faithful to us, and wilt not suffer us to go wrong unchastised and unrebuked.

And we rejoice that it is in thine heart to bring us toward true manhood. It is not in nature to do it; it is not in our own will; it is not in the will of those around about us. Of thee we must be born. We must find our way to ourselves through thy guidance. We rejoice, therefore, in the manifestation of thyself in Jesus Christ, and in the shedding abroad of the Holy Spirit, by which we are enlightened and inspired, and by which we shall be sanctified.

And now, we pray that we may submit ourselves to thy benevolent kindness, to thy care and education, more implicitly. May we as little children be led by the hand of thy providence. May we, as children that have grown to know their parents, be led by the love of thy heart. And we beseech of thee that we may from day to day grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

If there be hindrances in the way of any, wilt thou help them to remove them. If there be easily besetting sins, help them to overcome them. If there be temptations that lie in ambush, mightier than their power of resistance, open a way of escape for them. If there be those that are discouraged from their repeated weaknesses and failures to be what Christians should be, grant, O Lord, that they may still pluck up their courage. May they gird themselves for new enterprises, and to the end of life strive for that bright and shining and better way.

We pray that thou wilt have under thy guardianship those that are beginning life, before whom are all its experiences. We who have thrust so much of life behind us, who have made our sign, our stamp, our seal, upon so many years—what have we in the future but to hope for the consummation of the

few remaining years which are allotted us here, and then our entrance upon the heavenly rest?

How many there are who, after their life in the world was closed, lived on, and still live, in the world beyond! And the many who stand in strength and good cheer, the many who stand ignorant of right and wrong, the many whose passions are ready to draw them aside, the many for whom snares are laid, the many who are watched for that they may be destroyed—O thou that wast their fathers' God, may the prayers that have been offered for them be heard!

And we pray that thou wilt by thy grace and providence snatch those from the hands of the destroyer who without help will be destroyed. Return any that are already going into forbidden ways. And we pray that thou wilt confirm and establish in the right way those who are doubting. And we beseech of thee that the young may grow up more virtuous, more honorable, more wise, and more just, than those have been who have preceded them.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt cleanse this great city, and the great city upon our border. Grant that purity and morality and the fear of God and the love of man may prevail, and injustice and wickedness and corruption in every form be rebuked and hide themselves.

We pray for our whole land. We beseech of thee that we may have peace in our midst, and that men may be bound to their fellow-men by benevolence, and that there may be no more hating and hurting and destroying.

Oh, for the day of righteousness! Oh, for the time when the heart of God shall be felt in the hearts of men! May there be more pity and less contempt. May there be more helpfulness and less hindering. May there be more knowledge and less prejudice. May there be more that shall bind together, and less that shall divide and separate.

Let thy kingdom come everywhere. May nations learn war no more. May peace come and settle down upon the earth, its final possession. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word spoken to-night. Grant that the beginnings of thoughts of good may not be extinguished. Thou that wilt not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax until thou dost bring forth judgment unto victory, oh, be tender and gentle with the rising thoughts of a better life in those who have been beguiled! Oh, help those to break away from sin who have been ensnared by it! Have compassion on those who are destroying themselves. Hold back the children of pious parents. Hold back those who have been much prayed for. Oh, remember their mothers! Remember their fathers! Remember self-sacrificing sisters that toil and labor to sustain brothers far away. Remember those who, having been brought up in homes of purity, are now without home, exiled, struggling for life, amid the bewilderments and temptations of this great city. God, take care of the young, and help them. O Lord Jesus, inspire them to look unto their fathers' God, the God of their youth, the God of all love and all helpfulness. And so may they live that this life shall be a victory. And by it may they achieve an entrance into that life which is to come—into the heavenly land. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

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